

# 3ID Soldiers remembered tree ceremony honors 13

Story and Photos by  
**Catherine Caruso**  
*Frontline Staff*

Spec. Michael Deem was a surfer, a skydiver, and a devoted husband and father of three before joining the

Army in 2002 to better provide for his family, his wife, Lynne, said.

Pfc. Landon Giles told his sister he felt it was his duty to serve his country, so that others wouldn't have to. Pfc. Min Choi emigrated to the

U.S. from South Korea, and hoped to become a U.S. citizen.

These Soldiers were among thirteen remembered by the 3rd Infantry Division and Fort Stewart communities at a tree dedication ceremony Apr. 21 on Warriors Walk.

"He was a wild man," Lynn Deem said of husband Michael, a man jumped out of airplanes with a chute that was too small for him, because he liked the rush. Yet when Deem decided to join the Army at the age of 32, he chose an occupational specialty in computers, a job he hoped would keep him close to his family, as the global war on terror escalated, he requested a transfer.

"He said 'get me as close to Florida as you can,' and that was Fort Stewart. The Army told him he could go whenever he wanted but as soon as he got there, he would get orders to Iraq," his wife said.

"He was OK with that. He just wanted us to be closer to his family when he went," she said.

Jennifer Giles Whitworth got married early because her little brother wanted to give the bride away, and came to Fort Stewart to see him before he left for Iraq.

She wears a photo, taken that day, on a silver dogtag around her neck.

"I asked him, 'why the infantry,' and he said 'someone has to do it.' I said 'what makes you think it has to be you?' and he said 'if you don't have it, you can't understand it,'" Giles-Whitworth said. "He said 'better for me to go (to Iraq) than any man with a wife,

and a family."

Giles and Pfc. Min Soo Choi were killed by an improvised explosive device while patrolling with their unit about a month after arriving in Iraq.

"We'll remember them. We're very proud of them, and the sacrifice they made," Cpt. Ryan McDermott, rear detachment commander, 6/8 Cavalry Squadron, said. "They are heroes. They'll live on forever, as part of the legacy of our squadron."

The Eastern Redbud trees planted in their memory are a

fitting tribute to those Soldiers who have given their lives so that others may enjoy liberty, Lt. Col. Noel Nicolle, rear detachment commander, 3rd Infantry Division, said.

He quoted Thomas Jefferson, saying, "... the tree of liberty must be refreshed with the blood of patriots, and tyrants."

"They sacrificed their blood, and their futures, for a democracy halfway around the world," Nicolle went on to say.

"All who bear arms for

this great country are a tribute to the American spirit," he said.

Giles' aunt and godmother, Mary Ann (Deem) Warner, said she is proud of her nephew's service, and saddened by his death, but the ceremony reminded her there are many others who share her sense of loss.

"I live in Lakeland, Fla., and we never see any Soldiers there. When you are here, you see the faces, the names, the yellow ribbons, and it really hits you," she said. "I grieve for them all."



**Jennifer Giles-Whitworth at the tree dedicated in memory of her brother, Pfc. Landon Giles.**



**A young boy honors a fallen Soldiers with an American flag following the tree dedication ceremony.**

## Warrior's Walk — memories left behind...

Story and Photos by  
**Lewis Levine**  
*MWR Public Affairs*

The rows of small American flags wave gently on the memorials honoring 3rd Infantry Soldiers who have given their life in support of the war on terror. Fort Stewart officials have dubbed the sidewalk where 69 Rosebud trees are planted as Warriors Walk. Each tree bears a granite marker with the name and rank of each member of the division killed.

Over the years the Fort Stewart museum has been collecting items left behind at the trees by friends or family members of the fallen Soldier. Stored in a locked nine-drawer cabinet in the museum, the items range from an empty Crown Royal liquor bottle to religious artifacts.

Museum technician, Jeff Reed and special projects manager, Vicki Hester each make a weekly trip to the hallowed site to recover items, which may not stand the test of time, or rainy conditions. "We go out and try to collect the items before it rains so they don't get damaged," Hester said, as she displayed the contents of each drawer.

Reed has commissioned a display that will be set up in a section of the museum to house artifacts from Operation Iraqi Freedom. In the glass display are dozens of items recovered from the site. When asked what was the purpose of an empty Crown Royal bottle along with several cups being on display, Reed explained, "We found the empty, bottle along with the cups, lined up at Spec. Joel Bertoldie's memorial; all we can imagine is his friends wanted to have one last drink in his honor." The display case also contains a Black Sabbath compact disk, as well as cigarettes, coins, and distinctive unit military crests.

A dollar bill on display left at the site of Spec Gregory Sanders has left Hester wondering about the meaning. "We found that to be odd. We just didn't understand the meaning of leaving money there." Both Reed and Hester try not to read into why items are left, but feel the items have special meaning to those who left it. "We found a coin recently left at a site that is given out only by a 3 star general. The only thing we could imagine is that individual served in the general's organization. When we pick up the items we realize each of these Soldiers have a story to tell."

When the items are gathered, they are taken to the museum, cleaned and placed into a database where they are assigned a number and the date the item was recovered. All artifacts are handled by the same standard in which items at the Vietnam memorial in Washington D.C. are handled. Hester explained they no longer recover such items as flags, balloons, flowers or artifacts, which may rust. "We just don't have a lot of space to house everything left behind," Hester said. She explained the items left at the sites indefinitely could stand up to inclement weather.

At the site, named after Medal of Honor recipient Sgt. 1st Class Paul Smith, there is an eagle displayed. "We understand he loved eagles and his wife had it placed there a while back. Its a little weather beaten, and eventually we will have it repainted."



**(Above) Pictured are some of the items retrieved from Warrior's Walk and now on display at the Army Museum on post. (Below) Objects left by some unseen mourner who paid their respects in private.**



When asked how the recovered artifacts were differentiated from trash, Hester explained it was by the way the items are placed at the site.

One Friday afternoon, at the site of Staff Sgt Lincoln Hollinsaid, was an open packet of chewing tobacco neatly placed at the foot of the Rosebud tree perimeter waiting to be collected in next weeks sweep. It would become yet another artifact in the untold stories of the Soldiers of Warriors Walk.



Photos by Catherine Caruso

## Warrior's Walk... the price of freedom

**Warrior's Walk recently received the dedication of 13 trees planted in honor of 3ID Soldiers who sacrificed their lives for Iraqi Freedom in the fight against global terrorism.**





# Stewart hosts ‘Commanding General’s Volunteers of the Year Awards’ recognition ceremony

Story and Photos by  
**Catherine Caruso**  
*Frontline Staff*

## 2005 Volunteers of the Year

A few years ago, Heather Conkle started volunteering because Army Community Services provided day care. Today, the America Red Cross volunteer coordinator is 2005 Fort Stewart Volunteer of the Year.

At the 19th Fort Stewart/Hunter Army Airfield Garrison Volunteer of the Year awards, honorees were praised for what they contribute to the installation for Soldiers and their families.

While Soldiers fight to provide a better life for others in places like Afghanistan and Iraq, volunteers fight to provide a better quality of life for Soldiers’ families here, Col. John Kidd, garrison commander, Fort Stewart, said.

“By caring about the people in their communities, they fix more problems than any garrison commander could; There’s no way we could ever reward you enough,” Kidd said.

Army Community Services recorded 119 thousand hours volunteered last year, worth an estimated \$2.2 million dollars.

“You are the heart of the Rock,” Linda Heifferon, director, Morale, Welfare, and Recreation, said. “All of you have displayed courage, leadership, and patriotism. You’re here, behind the scenes, doing what you do best, taking care of Soldiers and their families.”

Many of those honored said they get as much as they give from their efforts.

Conkle, who said she once “felt stuck” in a military community where few jobs paid enough to justify the cost of child care, credits volunteering for getting her “unstuck” until her husband completed his assignment.

“Now, I like helping other people adjust to the military lifestyle — seeing that light bulb go off, where they realize they can contribute something, wherever they happen to be,” she said.

Volunteer Joan Horning, recognized as a Volunteer of Merit for her work with DENTAC, said volunteer work helped her make friends every time her husband was moved to another installation.

“There’s also lot of satisfaction in helping other people,” she said. “And there have been a lot of people helping me, so I don’t want them to be forgotten. Being recognized is nice, but no one does it alone.”

Fort Stewart’s Youth Volunteer of the Year didn’t do it alone, either, he said.

As a Child and Youth services volunteer, LaCharles Hughes reads to younger children, brings snacks to security guards on duty, and helps out with youth activities on Fort Stewart. But he gives his friend Jeff Ashmen, one of 2004’s Youth honorees, the credit for getting him involved, and the people he works with for keeping him busy.

“It’s the people. You get to meet a lot of people,” he said. “I like to meet people, and you meet good people.”



**Representing Fort Stewart — Heather Conkle (center)**  
**American Red Cross Volunteer Coordinator**



**Representing Hunter AAF — Julie Opperman (center)**  
**HHC Aviation BCT, FRG**

## Volunteers of Merit



**Representing Fort Stewart — Joan Horning (left)**  
**Stewart Senior Spouses Leadership Seminar**



**Representing Hunter AAF — Mary Barton (left)**  
**ARC at Tuttle Health Clinic**

## Youth Volunteer



**Fort Stewart — LaCharles Hughes**  
**Youth Volunteer MWR Youth Center**  
**Not pictured — Jeremy Miller, Hunter AAF MWR Youth Services**

**PHATT KATZ COMEDY THANG**  
\$ AFTER PARTY

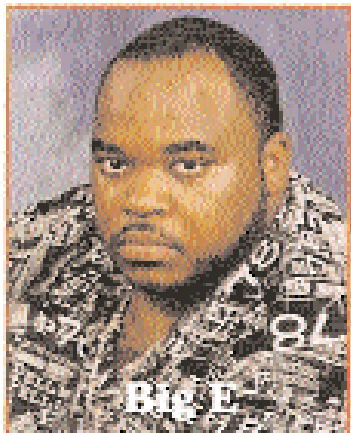
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# For boys, girls of all ages — the Big Top is coming for 4 big shows

**Lewis Levine**  
*MWR Public Affairs*

Starting tomorrow through May, Fort Stewart’s Walker Field will be transformed into an entertainment Mecca.

The renowned HAMID BIG TOP CIRCUS rolls into town with their death defying aerialists, educated animals and clever clowns.

Circus management promises to keep adults as well as children on the edge of their seats, under an old-fashioned big top.

Audiences will be entertained by a host of internationally acclaimed artists, ranging from Dondi, a thirty-five year old, 9,500 pound performing elephant to the

bewildering magic of the Fabulous Darnells.

The celebrated Espana Family will also be on hand to tumble, twist and twirl through an astonishing offering of Olympic-quality acrobatics.

For those who like to cover their eyes and yet steal a peek through their fingers, the split-second precision of Master Archers, the Duo Vital, will certainly aim to please.

Add jugglers, daredevils and dancing poodles to the mix and you have the perfect recipe for fun and excitement.

“The circus is the only place where everyone can feel like a kid again,” com-

ments show producer, James Hamid, Jr.

“And it (the circus) is the only form of live entertainment that has never required any type of censorship,” he said.

“There’s truly something for every age under our big top,” he said.

The Hamid’s are the oldest established family of circus producers in the United States and Canada today.

They have provided quality performances for over seventy-five consecutive years.

The Big Top Circus offers a nostalgic return to an era that has all but disappeared, along with soda fountains and bobby socks.

Four performances are

scheduled, beginning at 7 p.m., Apr. 29; 2 and 7 p.m. Apr. 30.

There is only one show May 1 at 2 p.m.

Tickets are available at the following locations — • Liberty County Chamber of Commerce office, 500 East Oglethorpe Highway

• Fort Stewart Leisure Activities Center and Hunter Army Airfield Outdoor Recreation Services.

Ticket prices are \$12.00 for adults, ages 13 and up; \$7.00 for children, ages 3 through 12, and free to children ages 2 and under.

The circus is open to the general public.

For more information call 767-6212.





# CHAPLAIN'S CORNER

Chap. (Lt. Col.) Richard Quinn

Today I stood along “Warrior’s Walk” as 13 trees and memorial stones were dedicated. Families and friends sat under the blue and white striped canopies in mournful silence as the names were read and kneeling Soldiers folded the desert camouflage coverings. With pain too deep for the rest of us to truly understand, the grieving say “thank you” as we extend our hand or give a comforting hug. While we at Ft. Stewart paused to reflect, the rest of America went about their business unaware, just like every other day in the Land of the Free.

I returned to my office at Marne Chapel where the morning event had begun and opened my email. A chaplain friend in Germany had sent me a “Thought for the Day” from American revolutionary, Thomas Paine. “Those who

expect to reap the blessings of freedom must undergo the fatigue of supporting it.”

On the evening news I watch politicians argue and newscast-



ers editorialize about the financial cost of combat. The “man-on-the-street” answers a reporter’s question with the experiential depth of a mud puddle as he supposedly speaks for all our common citizenry.

A few seconds of airtime and a commercial comes on for

SUVs only to be ironically followed by the next news soundbite on gas prices. (“Those who expect to reap the blessings of freedom must undergo the fatigue of supporting it.”)

Game shows, reality shows, American Idol — everyone is wanting to reap the blessings of financial freedom by luck, wit, guts, talent or charm.

We watch with intrigue as winners strut and losers cry foul. Millionaire athletes, Hollywood celebs, rap and rock musicians — everyone is an expert on freedom, fidelity, and foreign policy. (“Those who expect to reap the blessings of freedom must undergo the fatigue of supporting it.”)

As I walk the “Warrior’s Walk,” I pray for the fallen; I pray for the families; I pray for the Soldiers yet to come... “Those who expect to reap the blessings of freedom must undergo the fatigue of supporting it.”

## WORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

### Fort Stewart

Catholic			Sunday School	Diamond Elem.	9:30 a.m.
Sunday Mass	Heritage	9 a.m.	Kids' Church	Across from Diamond	11:00 a.m.
Saturday Mass	Heritage	5 p.m.	American Samoan		
Weekday Mass	Victory	11:45 a.m.	Sunday Worship	Vale	1 p.m.
Protestant			Muslim		
Sunday Protestant	Marne	11 a.m.	Friday Jum'ah	Bldg. 610	12:30 p.m.
Sunday Gospel Service	Victory	11 a.m.	Masjid (Daily)	Bldg. 610	9 a.m.
Sunday Family Friendly	Vale	11 a.m.	Lutheran		
Tuesday Healing Service	WACH	11:30 a.m.	Sunday Worship	Marne	9 a.m.

### Hunter Army Airfield

Protestant					
Protestant Sunday School	Religious Ed.Center	9:30 a.m.			
Sunday Service	Chapel	11 a.m.			
Catholic					
Sunday Mass	Chapel	9:30 a.m.			
CCD	Religious Ed. Center	11 a.m.			

## MWR happenings...

### Six Flags Trip —

Leave the driving to us, and enjoy a fun filled day trip to Six Flags Over Atlanta Theme park with the family on Sat., May 7.

The Fort Stewart Leisure Activities Center is hosting a trip to the magical land of Ferris wheels and rollercoasteris for \$31 per person and \$1 for children 3 years and under.

The bus will leave at 5 a.m. and is expected to return at midnight.

For more information on this and other exciting trips call 767-8609.

### Matting and Framing Class —

Take that special photograph and make it really stand out by taking the matting and framing course at the Fort Stewart Leisure Activities Center.

The class is held every 1st and 3rd Saturday of the month from 8 a.m. ñ 2p.m.

Pre-registration is required by the prior Tuesday.

Customer is responsible for their own material.

For more information call 767-8609.

### Mothers’ Day —

Make a “Kodak moment” for your loved one as a Mothers’ Day Special.

The library is continuing to provide the free DVD recording service.

And, we have expanded our recording session days to Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday 9 a.m. - 7 p.m. by appointment only.

Stop by and make an appointment or call 767-2260/2828.

## Children find a way to keep in touch

### Nondice Powell

Frontline Staff

Students from Largo-Tibet Elementary School made a trip to the Army and Air Force Exchange at Hunter Army Airfield.

The students, along with third grade teacher Shirley Watson, decided to do something special to celebrate the 100th day of school.

The idea was “100 pennies for 100 soldiers” to support Soldiers who volunteered at the school.

The students planned to buy phone cards with the money they raised.

“We collected pennies and we brought them here and bought calling cards for the people overseas,” said Rachel Stidley, a third grader and child of a deployed Soldier.

Several students, Watson, who is a school counselor and the principal came to Hunter’s Army Air Force Exchange to buy the phone cards.

With the help of Live Oaks Community Church, Shoney’s, and Kroger, the students collected \$650.

They were able to buy more than forty 200-unit phone cards.

After purchasing the cards, the students donated the phone cards to the 260th Quarter Master Battalion.

The phone cards are only a part of an ongoing relationship between the Soldiers of the

260th QM Bn. and Largo-Tibet Elementary School, explained Barbara Jenkin, Hunter’s School Liaison Officer.

“Largo-Tibet actually adopted the 260th Quarter Master Battalion,” Lt. Col John Sutton, commander 260th Quarter Master Battalion, said.

The 260th QM Bn. will send the phone cards to Soldiers overseas.

Sutton said the support from the children and many others in the community means a great deal to the Soldiers.

“It makes you feel wonderful and it’ll make the Soldiers feel wonderful as well,” said Sutton.

Rachel Stidley said she is sad that her dad is deployed.

She also said it makes it a lot easier when people support the Soldiers.

Stidley wanted to help make it easier for Soldiers like her father to call home.

“They can call their families and listen to them talk,” said Stidley.

The students hope to do more in the future to help Soldiers and there families back at Fort Stewart.



Nondice Powell

**Students from Largo-Tibet Elementary School look on as their principal Jerri Wichman pays for the phone cards at Hunter Army Airfield they purchased to send to deployed Soldiers.**

# BIRTH ANNOUCEMENTS

Provided by Winn Army Community Hospital

### Apr. 12

• **Camren Michele Jones**, a girl, 10 pounds, 3 ounces, born to Michael and Brianne Jones.

• **Kyleigh Arianna-Olivia Marlowe**, a girl, 6 pounds, 12 ounces, born to Bobby and Kiltoya Marlowe.

### Apr. 13

• **Blake Edward Jachimek**, a boy, 7 pounds, born to Paul and Amanda Jachimek.

• **Luke Connor Snodgrass**, a boy, born to James Keith and Jackie Leigh Snodgrass.

### Apr. 14

• **Leilani Brenda Martinez**,

a girl, 6 pounds, 4 ounces, born to Enrique and Maria Martinez.

• **Olivia Macey Miller**, a girl, 7 pounds, 14 ounces, born to Seith Patrick and Kristin Brooke Miller

• **Paige Leanne Starr**, a girl, 5 pounds, 11 ounces, born to Andrew and Helen Starr.

### Apr. 15

• **Jayley Lateesha Smith**, a girl, 7 pounds, 11 ounces, born to Leonard and Kelly Ann Smith.

• **Jackson Hendricks Slagowski**, a boy, 8 pounds, 6 ounces, born to Craig and

Rebecca Slagowski.

### Apr. 16

• **Madilyn Anna Colby**, a girl, 8 pounds, 4 ounces, born to Colby and Steffani Colby.

• **Israel Jon-Andrew Hall**, a boy, 9 pounds, 7 ounces, born to Calvin and Tommie Hall.

• **Aaron Michael Kittok**, a boy, 10 pounds, born to Joseph and Shannon Kittok.

### Apr. 18

• **Dyland Rermon Byrd**, a boy, 8 pounds, 4 ounces, Sheco and Sharell Astred Byrd.

## Winn focus on your health — Had your fruit today?

### Lt. Col. Will Wheeler

Darnall Army Com. Hosp.

Are you failing at grocery shopping? Is your cart filled, but with little to no fresh fruits and vegetables? Most Americans do not achieve the recommended amounts of at least five servings per day for optimal health. With that in mind, we need to start spending more time in the produce section and end up with more fresh produce in our shopping carts.

This week we’ll take a closer look at fruit.

• Easy to transport (the perfect snack) — Since there aren’t too many vending machines that sell fruit, your best bet is to buy them at the grocery store and make sure to have them available throughout the day. Whether you store it in a cargo pocket, brief case, book bag or desk drawer, fresh fruit is a ready, quick nutritious snack.

• It fills your stomach — Fresh fruits are good fiber sources as well. In addition to the health benefits of a high-fiber diet, fiber-containing foods can be quite filling. Adding fruit between or during meals will help reduce your intake of other higher-calorie foods.

• Nutrient-dense — Most fruits are good sources of vitamin A and C, potassium, and folic acid. Fruits contain little to no fat, have zero cholesterol, and average 60 calories per serving. Vitamin A and C are antioxidants, which have been shown to help reduce the risk for some cancers, heart disease, cataracts, and arthritis. When you also consider fruit as a low-calorie, no- or low-fat food, adding fruit to your diet will probably assist you in meeting your body-fat goals.

• Contains phytochemicals — Phytochemicals may not sound appetizing, but these plant compounds found in fruit, vegetables, legumes, and whole grains may help protect us against some chronic health problems, including some forms of cancer and heart disease. More is being discovered about these compounds and their exact role in reducing health risk. In the mean time, it is a prudent recommendation to select a variety of foods that contain phytochemicals.

• Buy fresh — Canned, bottled, and frozen fruits are just as nutritious as fresh, but it is hard to beat the taste of fresh fruit. It takes time to select, store, and handle but the taste of fresh fruit is worth it. Give it a try.

• Can’t beat the variety — There are hundreds of different types of fruit. As part of the national campaign to promote eating five fruits and vegetables per day, the National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion features a fruit of the month at Web site [www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpa/5ADay/month/index.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpa/5ADay/month/index.htm). The website contains information on the history, consumption data, selection and storage, preparation, quick facts, and of course recipes for each featured fruit.

## Excitement builds for case lot sales at local commissary

### Adam Austin

DeCa Public Affairs

**FORT LEE, Va.** — The Defense Commissary Agency set a new record during its biannual case lot sale last September, with sales totaling more than \$11 million. That kind of success has the commissary buzzing with anticipation for the next case lot sale this May, and with savings of up to 50 percent, many customers are getting excited as well.

The worldwide case lot sale event is held every May and September. The sale offer shoppers the chance to buy bulk quantities of their favorite products at savings of up to 50 percent; far above the 30 percent or more they normally save by shopping at their commissary. Case lot sales represent one of the many ways the commissary works to bring shoppers the best benefit possible.

“We are constantly looking for ways to give customers the most value for their money, and case lot sales are one of the most effective tools we have of giving that to our shoppers,” says Patrick B. Nixon, DeCA acting director and chief executive officer. “Our customers deserve the very best benefit we can give them.”

The exact date and time for the case lot sale will differ from location to location. Visit DeCA’s Web site at [www.commissaries.com](http://www.commissaries.com) for a complete listing of dates

and times for your commissary. While you’re there, you can also sign up for the “Commissary Connection” newsletter. “Commissary Connection” delivers case lot sale and general news about DeCA promotions.

Case lot sales occurring during May will coincide with Commissary Awareness Month. The sales are the crowning event of a month devoted to commissaries and the benefit, and from a financial standpoint, for the commissary customer, it is also the most rewarding event of the month.

The Defense Commissary Agency operates a worldwide chain of more than 270 commissaries providing groceries to military personnel, retirees and their families in a safe and secure shopping environment. Authorized patrons purchase items at cost plus a 5-percent surcharge, which covers the costs of building new commissaries and modernizing existing ones. Shoppers save an average of more than 30 percent on their purchases compared to commercial prices — savings worth about \$2,700 annually for a family of four. A core military family support element, and a valued part of military pay and benefits, commissaries contribute to family readiness, enhance the quality of life for America’s military and their families, and help recruit and retain the best and brightest men and women to serve their country.

## Free car clinic help for Stewart family members —

**Community initiative aims at assisting families while their Soldiers are deployed to Iraq.**

There will be a free car care clinic, May 7, 9 - 11 a.m. in St. Philip’s Parking Lot (Across from Olney field on General Stewart Way).

Technicians from Hinesville Ford and NeSmith Chevrolet will help you better understand your car or truck (especially for spouses of the deployed). Checks of your oil, fluid levels, and tire pressure will be made. They will be providing help in understanding everything from tire tread to trouble lights.

For more information, call 876-2744 or send e-mail to [stphilips@coastalnow.net](mailto:stphilips@coastalnow.net).

This will be a free service to the community as the first in a series of Life Skills Lessons to help elderly, singles, and spouses better cope by better understanding everything from cars and homes to finances.





*Megan Mattson and Jessica Helton cheer on members of their Diamond Elementary School 4th grade class. Representatives of 13 schools and adult education programs from Liberty and Long Counties competed in the spring Special Olympics held at Fort Stewart.*

## 2005 Fort Stewart Special Olympics



# Special athletes come from area schools to compete

Story and Photos by  
**Catherine Caruso**  
*Frontline Staff*

Fort Stewart hosted the spring 2005 Special Olympics at the Quick Track behind Cottrell Field.

Athletes from thirteen schools and adult education programs in Liberty and Long County competed for top honors in each age division. Soldiers and community members sweated it out right alongside the athletes, setting-up events, judging competitions, and cheering the Olympians through the day's events.

"This is my first time out here, and I'm having a lot of fun," Sgt. Treeseey Brisco, D Battery, 1/39 Field Artillery, said. "I'm meeting a lot of people for the first time, and everyone's just clicking. It's a lot of fun."

Brisco was cheering for Alegra Bradley, a Midway Middle School student who



*Verean Calvin (center), Scott Calvin (right) and Richard Revels (left) are awarded first, second, and third place honors in the Division 22 softball throw.*

was preparing to compete in the 200-meter run after finishing first place in the Division 2 long jump.

Bradley called the Special

Olympics "more fun than school."

"I can run, I can jump, have fun. It's great," she said.



*Ethan Hudson, a Frank Long Elementary School student, pulls into the lead during the 10 meterwalk event. Mom Anita Davis was there to meet him at the finish line, where he took 1st place in his division.*



# Hunter breaks ground for new fitness center



Story and Photos by  
**Lewis Levine**  
*MWR Public Affairs*

In keeping up with the increased physical demands and ensuring military readiness of the Soldiers assigned to Fort Stewart and Hunter Army Airfield, MWR broke ground last week at Hunter on what is expected to become the premier physical fitness facility in the Army. The mission — to provide an environment where Soldiers are given the opportunity to enhance their fitness level to meet the challenges they may encounter during deployments.

During a ceremony held on Apr. 21, at the proposed location of the \$15.5 million dollar building, officials clutched gold colored shovels and officially broke ground on the new state-of-the-art Hunter Fitness Center. Hunter Garrison Commander, Lt. Col Jeffrey Goble told the spectators assembled, “This facility will have the most modern up to date equipment money can buy. The center will build on endurance and strengths to win on present and future battle fields.”

The new facility, which will span 70,000 square feet,

will replace the current physical fitness center built in 1958 which is no longer cost effective to repair according to MWR Director Linda Heifferon. She cited the condition of the warping basketball courts in the current gym as one reason the new facility was being built, “This facility has served us well. It has finally gotten to a point that we can no longer fix the gym floors. Lt. Col Goble has tried and tried and there is just no hope for it.”

The new fitness center will feature an Olympic size swimming pool which will be deep enough for special operation unit training.

The swimming pool will have a self cleaning apparatus to extract dirt from the water after Soldiers are finished training in full gear.

The center also will have racquetball courts, a climbing wall, free weights, an aerobics room, treadmills, stationary bikes and a basketball court.

The facility will be centrally air-conditioned, a vast improvement over the old non air-conditioned center.

In addition, locker rooms and showers will be heated.

The facility will be open to military ID card holders which will include the civilian workforce.

Shreeta Brathwaite, whose husband Sgt. Brendan Brathwaite is deployed with the 512th Quartermaster Company said, “I’m excited about the new gym. I work out three times a week, and look forward to using it when it’s finished.”

Assistant Manager, Jim Brayboy who has worked at the gym on and off for the past twenty-six years is anxious for the new facility to open. “I’m very excited for the soldiers, and see this as a definite improvement over what we currently have.”



(left to right) Col. John M. Kidd, garrison commander, Fort Stewart; Linda Heifferon, director, MWR; Lt. Col. Jeffrey Goble, garrison commander, Hunter AAF; Billy Harbert, CEO, Lambert Construction; Robert Sauntry, representative, Army Corps of Engineers; and James Simmons, manager, Hunter Fitness Center.

# Ranger Battalion ends successful deployment with motorcycle ride

**Walter Sokalski Jr.**  
*Army SOC Public Affairs*

**SAVANNAH, Ga.** — You could hear them coming a quarter mile away. It is not quite the stealthy approach that you’d expect from the “Quiet Professionals” of the 1st Battalion, 75th Ranger Regiment.

That’s OK. The movement Apr. 14 was not a military exercise, but the fifth running of a 60-mile motorcycle ride to celebrate the unit’s return from the U.S. Central Command’s area of operations in support of the Global War on Terrorism. The unofficial ride celebrated the end of another successful deployment for the Savannah-based Rangers.

“We organize these rides before and after every deployment,” said the event’s primary organizer, 1st Sgt. Michael Ferrusi, 1st Battalion Headquarters and Headquarters Company. “The ‘after ones’ are the hardest,” he continued. “Everyone wants some time off.”

That wasn’t the case this time. The normal 10 to 20 motorcycle enthusiasts from the battalion for the four previous deployment rides grew to approximately 80 cyclists in spite of the 50 degree temperatures and cloudy, threatening skies overhead. They represented today’s 1st Battalion, former members of the Ranger Regiment and bike riders and military supporters from the local community. Leading the column of cyclists were nearly a dozen members of the Savannah Metropolitan Police Department.

“To have this kind of turnout is awesome,” stated Tommy Hoffman, a retired Ranger. Hoffman is a veteran of several previous deployment rides.

Pfc. Matt Degraaf agreed. “It’s fun,” the novice cyclist said. “It’s great to see all these people from the local community out here to support us.” This was the young Ranger’s first deployment ride.

The morning began with a safety brief for all members of the unit. As is customary of all Army units starting a long weekend, Maj. Matthew Tackett, company commander, extolled the assembled Rangers to be safe on their first extended weekend since returning state-side. He then joined several dozen spectators waving the thundering motorcycles on their way.

“This (the deployment ride) is a good opportunity for Rangers to do something together under less than stressful conditions,” he said.

The three-hour ride covered highways in coastal Georgia and southeastern South Carolina. The column threaded its way from Hunter Army Airfield to downtown Savannah and out to the resort town of Tybee Island. Doubling back to Savannah, the group headed

north to Hardeeville, S.C., before turning south on Interstate 95 for the final leg to a popular local restaurant just off the interstate. Once there, the crowd doubled as non-riding unit Soldiers and their families came together for an afternoon of food and camaraderie.

This was the last deployment ride for Ferrusi, at least as its primary organizer. The 18-year Army veteran leaves shortly to attend the Sergeants Major Academy at Fort Bliss, Texas. However, this tall, sinewy first sergeant will remember this ride for other reasons.

Ferrusi led the ride alongside Discovery Channel personality Billy Lane, the popular custom cycle builder and owner of Choppers, Inc. Minutes before the ride began, Lane rode into the battalion area atop Ferrusi’s recently customized motorcycle.

Several months earlier, Isabelle Ferrusi had e-mailed Lane inquiring how she could obtain new handlebars for her husband’s bike.

“I received an e-mail asking me to call Billy,” she explained. “At first I thought I was talking to someone in his shop named Billy. I eventually realized that I was actually talking to Billy Lane.” That telephone call resulted in a trip to Bike Week in Daytona, Fla., with the motorcycle in tow.

There, before a raucous crowd of thousands, Isabelle telephonically notified her husband of what Lane was planning for his beloved motorcycle as the inaugural customization under the recently established “Blood, Sweat and Gears” program for returning servicemembers.

“I live a dream life. It’s great,” explained Lane just prior to the presentation of the bike to Mike Ferrusi. “I ride motorcycles for a living and do what I love for a living. Those guys (the Rangers) are fighting for our freedom overseas. I figured it’d be a nice thing to do, a nice welcome home.”

Until he actually set eyes on the bike for the first time this morning, Ferrusi found it all hard to believe. “I thought it was a practical joke,” he said, recounting that mid-March international call from his wife.

Members of his unit don’t think it’s a joke. His commander, Tackett, feels that his first sergeant was a excellent choice. “The first sergeant has been the first and last one out on every deployment. He gets it done. He’s been awarded for valor but this is something special.”

According to Lane, the Rangers of 1st Battalion are continuing a tradition started nearly 60 years ago. “The Soldiers returning from overseas in the 50’s created the custom motorcycle business. Right now the country is divided and I wanted to show my appreciation, show what side I’m on.”



Photos by Gillian M. Albro

**Current and former Rangers from 1st Battalion, 75th Ranger Regiment, Hunter Army Air Field, Ga., wait for the begining of the fifth running of the unit's deployment motorcycle ride on a at Hunter Army Air Field.**



**Current and former Rangers celebrate the unit's return from a successful deployment. It was the fifth deployment ride and led the group through the streets and highways of Georgia and into South Carolina.**



**1st Sgt. Michael Ferrusi, 1st Battalion, 75th Ranger Regiment, Hunter Army Air Field, Ga., rides the Georgia highways with Discovery Channel personality Billy Lane.**



**1st Sgt. Michael Ferrusi, 1st Battalion, 75th Ranger Regiment, Hunter Army Air Field, Ga., is interviewed by a local television station before being presented a custom motorcycle by Discovery Channel personality Billy Lane of Choppers, Inc.**